Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

image correlation enhancing means for enhancing, when a plurality of digital still image data of successive original images of the same format have been input, an image correlation degree by rearranging the image data such that a Hamming distance among the images decreases;

extraction means for extracting respective image correlation information ~~front~~ from the plural digital still image data rearranged by the image correlation enhancing means, by calculating an exclusive OR of pixel values of pixel positions associated with preceding image and subsequent image data in the order of the image data;

encoding means for compressing the respective image correlation information extracted by the extraction means to encoded data by run-length encoding; and

output means for outputting the encoded data encoded by the run-length encoding by the encoding means, and first image data of the image data rearranged by the image correlation enhancing means.

18. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said extraction means compares a Hamming distance between preceding image data and subsequent image data in the order of the plural digital still image data rearranged by the image correlation enhancing means, with a Hamming distance between preceding image data and image data obtained by parallel-moving subsequent image data, and if the Hamming distance between

the preceding image data and the image data obtained by parallel-moving the subsequent image data is smaller, said extraction means calculates an exclusive OR of pixel values of pixel positions associated with the preceding image and the parallel-moved subsequent image data in the order of the image data, thereby extracting the respective image correlation information.

19. (Original) An image processing apparatus comprising:

code conversion means for converting a plurality of input multi-value still image data of successive original images of the same format to gray codes;

extraction means for setting one of the plural multi-value still image data converted by the code conversion means to the gray codes as reference image data, and extracting respective image correlation information of the plural multi-value still image data including the reference image data by an exclusive OR operation of the same bit;

first encoding means for checking a run of zero values in the respective image correlation information extracted by the extraction means, and converting the image correlation information to entropy codes, thus producing first encoded data;

second encoding means for encoding the reference image data to second encoded data; and

output means for outputting the second encoded data encoded by the second encoding means and the first encoded data encoded by the first encoding means.

20. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the first encoding means comprises Huffman encoding means.

Claims 21-24 (Canceled).